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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Sezer: I Stressed to Syria the Need for Lebanon Pullout -  
Milliyet  
Chirac Launches a 'Yes' Campaign for EU Constitution -  
Hurriyet  
Chirac: We Cannot Exclude Turkey From the EU - Sabah  
The Guardian: Ottomans' Legacy Will Make Europe 'Sick' -  
Aksam  
Twin Attacks in Iraq: 18 Killed, 36 Injured - Sabah  
Sharon: International Community Should Deal With Iran's  
Nuclear Program - Milliyet  
21 PKK Members Killed in Southeast Turkey - Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Sezer: My Syria Visit a Contribution to Peace - Radikal  
Rubin's Analysis of US-Turkey Ties: A Comedy of Errors -  
Cumhuriyet  
'Hawkish' Rubin Slams US After AK Party - Zaman  
Rubin: Barzani Provides Passive Support to PKK - Yeni Safak  
The Guardian: Europe to Become a 'Sick Man' if Balkan  
Countries Join EU - Cumhuriyet  
3 Suicide Attacks in a Day in Iraq: 22 Killed  
Wolfensohn US, EU, Russia and UN's Palestine Envoy - Radikal  
Rumsfeld Discusses With Bishkek Future of US Bases in  
Kyrgyzstan - Zaman  
US Protects 'Cuba's Bin-Ladin' Carilles - Radikal

BRIEFING

President Sezer Returns From Syria: Turkish President Ahmet  
Necdet Sezer said on Thursday he had urged Syria to pull all  
its forces out of Lebanon during a state visit he made to  
Damascus. 'We stressed the importance of pulling back  
Syria's soldiers from Lebanon under UN Security Council  
resolutions,' Sezer told a news conference on his return to  
Ankara. 'I'm pleased that Syria declared political will on  
this issue,' he said. Sezer said that he was given  
exceptional hospitality by President Assad and Prime  
Minister Otri during his stay in Damascus. According to  
Sezer, relations between Turkey and Syria are promising  
despite some rough times in the recent past. 'We are very  
happy to see that the business communities of both nations  
are interacting very firmly. Our ties with Syria will  
contribute to regional peace and stability,' Sezer noted.  
Turkish papers report State Department Spokesman Boucher as  
commenting on the visit: 'Anybody who's talking to Syria  
about how it could play a more harmonious role in the region  
brings the right message,' Boucher said, adding: 'The  
question is not the message. The question is how it's  
received and how it's acted on.'

US Invites Muslim Groups to 'Political Cooperation':  
Islamist-oriented "Yeni Safak" gives extensive coverage to  
the 'US-Muslim World Forum' held in Doha, Qatar on April 10-  
13. Some 200 participants discussed issues like ties  
between the US and Middle East and the Islamic world,  
elections in Palestine, regional security, human rights and  
media at the forum. The forum witnessed calls for dialogue  
and positive attitudes, and international media reports  
mostly focused on the dialogue attempts by the United States  
with Islamists, "Yeni Safak" comments. US officials have no  
objection to participation of radical organizations like  
 Hamas and Hizbullah in the reform process in the Middle East  
as long as they 'play by the rules,' which means compliance  
to democratic and legal procedures, says the report. "Yeni  
Safak" cites Richard Holbrooke, Martin Indyk, James Rubin,  
and Scott Carpenter among other participants to the  
meetings.

Students Protest US Anti-Terror Speaker Pratt: Nick Pratt,  
the director of Program on Terrorism and Security at the  
College of International and Security Studies at the George

1C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany, was protested by students during a presentation yesterday at Kocaeli University in Turkey's Kocaeli province. Pratt, in Istanbul for a public affairs program on anti-terrorism held by the US Istanbul Consulate, was stopped by students who threw eggs and shouted slogans during his presentation on terrorism. The university and security guards took Pratt to safety, papers report.

Erdogan Proposes Yerevan to Form Working Group on 'Genocide': In a letter to Armenian President Robert Kocharian, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan described the 1915 events between Armenians and Ottoman Turks as 'painful memories,' reports "Milliyet." 'Turkish and Armenian peoples have not only shared a common history and geography in a sensitive part of the world but they also lived together for many years,' said the letter. Erdogan invited Yerevan to form a group of historians and specialists from both countries to investigate the developments in 1915 in the archives of Turkey, Armenia and third countries, and to report their findings to the international community. The letter was sent to Kocharian via Tbilisi, Georgia due to lack of diplomatic relations between Ankara and Yerevan, says the report.

Bill on Return of Non-Muslim Minorities' Properties: The state foundations directorate has drawn up a bill expanding the grounds for returning non-Muslim minorities' properties sold or seized by state, "Radikal" reports on its front page. The EU and Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) find the bill as a good-intentioned attempt but 'insufficient,' according to the report. EU and minority groups in Turkey expect reparation fees to be paid for properties sold to third parties, says "Radikal."

Turkish Troops Kill 20 PKK Members: Turkish security forces killed some 20 PKK militants in a clash in southeast Turkey, and three soldiers died in the fighting on Thursday, papers report. Three security forces and a village guard died in the firefight which took place in Sirnak and Siirt provinces in southeastern Turkey.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: Turkish President to Syria

"Sezer, Syria and the US"

Mehmet Ali Kislali argued in the liberal-intellectual Radikal (4/15): "The US is an important country for Turkey's international relations. Yet it is similarly important for Turkey to evaluate the foreign policy considerations of its other relationships, especially the ones that are important for Turkey. Sezer's visit to Damascus is an indication of this policy. The US openly opposed to this visit, but the visit was in Turkey's interest. Syria currently pursues a friendly policy toward Turkey, and stands against the PKK. The welcoming ceremonies held for the Turkish president were symbolic but significantly nice. Turkey gained prestige with this visit."

"The Damascus Trip"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-politic Dunya (4/15): "Ambassador Edelman went beyond his diplomatic capacity by asking Sezer not to go to Syria. The visit of President Sezer to Damascus has given the final answer in the debate. . On the other hand, Syria does not have a clean record. The comforting thing is that President Assad does not seem to be defying the international community. Syria has already started a pull out from Lebanon. As for the Hariri assassination, the Syrian involvement is only matter of speculation because there is no hard proof yet. And Turkey should not be expected to shape its policy with other countries based on 'maybe' kind of arguments. The visit of President Sezer provided an opportunity for Turkey, a member of NATO as well as of the Islamic Conference Organization, to express the international community's concerns directly to the Syrian regime."

"After Syria"

Ahmet Tasgetiren argued in the Islamist Yeni Safak (4/15): "The argument about Turkey needing to be flexible and adapt itself to American policy does not make any sense. The defenders of this argument believe that it is a must due to realpolitik, and they also imply some consequences if Turkey does not comply. . Since we don't have an 'export of regime' type of crisis with Iran to Turkey and the issue of Syrian support for the PKK is over, this is the proper time for Turkey to establish a warm relationship with its neighbors. In this atmosphere, both Iran and Syria are labeled as the axis of evil by the US, and they are the most likely the targets of a US operation to reorganize the Middle East. . Turkey should realize that redesigning Syria and Iran is only a part of the big plan which will include Turkey eventually."

EDELMAN